

Champion of Pure Food

Side Lights on Dr. Harvey W. Wiley and His Tireless Crusade

Commander of the "Poison Squad" Is Somewhat of a Humorist, Who Says Americans Have the Worst Cooks and Get the Least Out of Their Foods—Has Ridden His Hobby For Twenty Years, Not to Death, but to a New Lease of Life

IF in the course of human events and under the benign influence of the new pure food law the people of the United States may eat and drink and be merry, giving no thought to the horrible probability of having taken into their systems various poisonous substances in their food and drink, the one man chiefly to be thanked for that delightful consummation is Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley. Officially Dr. Wiley is chief of the bureau of chemistry in the department of agriculture; unofficially he may be called commander in chief of the allied and amalgamated armies of the pure food crusade in America.

For twenty years Dr. Wiley has had a hobby and ridden it hard. At times this Pegasus of his has leaped over appalling precipices of human prejudice and tracked wearily through marshes of misunderstanding, but the doctor has ridden his hobby to a new lease of life rather than to death, for today he appears to have arrived very near the shining portals of success—the prevention by federal law of the use of poisonous substances as preservatives or colorings for food and drink, that is Dr. Wiley's hobby. By the passage of the measure known as the pure food law last June congress finally approved the efforts of Dr. Wiley and the thousands of other earnest workers in the cause of preserving the human stomach from premature decline.

Somewhat of a Humorist.

Dr. Wiley takes great joy in his work. Why not? It is something worth while to devote one's life to the protection of the health of 80,000,000

That remarkable experiment of Dr. Wiley's is no longer regarded as a joke, even by the most hopelessly jocular person. By years of patient, tireless observation the devoted chemist has proved what he set out to prove—that the use of substances such as boracic acid, salicylic acid and formaldehyde as preservatives for food or drink are positively injurious to the human system. By feeding his class of young men various kinds of food preserved or colored with the drugs employed by manufacturers he deduced his scientific facts which, embodied in his official reports, had much weight in securing the pure food law.

Incidents of Food Reform.

Since Dr. Wiley first made himself a popular national figure by thus testing the actual results of the eating of drugged food and boiling those results down to a scientific certainty many events of importance in the matter of food reform have taken place in the United States. Quite recently we have had Upton Sinclair's expose of packing house horrors in "The Jungle," followed by the passage of the meat inspection law, which requires that after Oct. 1 the manufacturers of canned meats, hams and other packing house products on their labels must call a spade a spade and not deceive the public by sending out canned veal or pork with a picture of a spring chicken on the label.

Dr. Wiley's work has dissipated several misconceptions. For instance, he has shown that it is not necessarily the food adulterants, but the preservatives and colorings, which do the damage to

The conversation turned to good old fourteen-year-old whisky, American brand.

"Humph!" said Dr. Wiley. "I'll make you some fourteen-year-old whisky in five minutes."

Turning to his chemical apparatus, the doctor took a bottle of alcohol, some burned sugar and other things and five minutes later had concocted a beautiful red liquor, which he passed around. All pronounced it fine old whisky.

"It isn't whisky at all," said Dr. Wiley. "It's the stuff that is often called whisky. By the use of what is known as 'aging oil' the greater portion of the stuff labeled 'fourteen-year-old whisky' is made in less than fourteen minutes."

Hams Smoked While You Wait.

As a member of the government's pure food law commission, sitting at New York during the latter part of September, Dr. Wiley added the fact that hams may be smoked while you wait. One witness testified that his house used a "patent smoke" for making smoked hams. This is a sort of paint, with which the ham is smeared, giving it the appearance of having been cured in the dear old smoke-house at home, as your grandmother used to do it.

Directly as a result of Dr. Wiley's investigations some very astounding facts regarding the true identity of the stuff we put into our stomachs from day to day have been brought to light. Just one item will suffice here. Your stomach may be too weak to stand more. The fastest and longest eating mule that pulls the garbage cart past your door is more important than he looks. Do not scorn him. Next year he may be eating his hoofs metamorphosed—stupendous change!—into "pure apple jelly" or "pure peach marmalade." But the fact that you are eating the hoofs of the defunct mule is not the most serious part of the proposition. The coloring matter used to deceive you into mistaking prepared mule hoof for a peach or apple product is the serious thing. That is what does the damage.

Dr. Wiley has estimated and declared that about 90 per cent of the manufactured foods sold in America contain deleterious substances introduced for the purpose of deceiving the public as to the true character of the product. "Barium made a colossal fortune," remarked Dr. Wiley on a recent occasion, "by acting on the principle that the American people like to be humbugged. To be cheated, fooled, bamboozled, cajoled, deceived, pettifogged, demagogued, hypnotized, manipulated and chiroprized are privileges dear to us all."

Even the operation of the new food law, if rigidly enforced, will not rob the American people of their cherished privilege of being humbugged if they continue to believe the statements of some manufacturers that certain drugs are good for their health, but the law will reduce the humbuggery very appreciably by insisting upon the proper labeling of all products, so that if one wants pure apple jelly he may buy a jar so labeled and if he prefers mule hoof he may go around looking for a label to indicate the animal.

It should be remembered that the new law relates not only to food, but to liquors and medicines, so that there must be government inspection of everything that goes down the human gullet provided that it is sold from state to state and thereby comes under the head of interstate commerce.

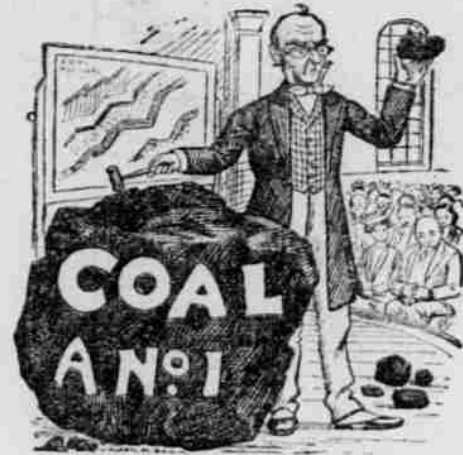
Uniform Food Law.

Dr. Wiley worked as hard for this uniform food law as many estimable clergymen are working for a uniform divorce law. As a matter of fact, the situation regarding food is pretty much the same as that regarding divorce. Each state has its own laws relating to food and to divorce. There are forty-six states and forty-six variations in divorce possibilities. Until the passage of the federal food law the manufacturers of some food products were compelled to place a different label on their goods for every state to which shipment was made. When the national law gets into active working order one label will serve for each state, and that label, if the government inspectors do their duty, will tell exactly what the package contains.

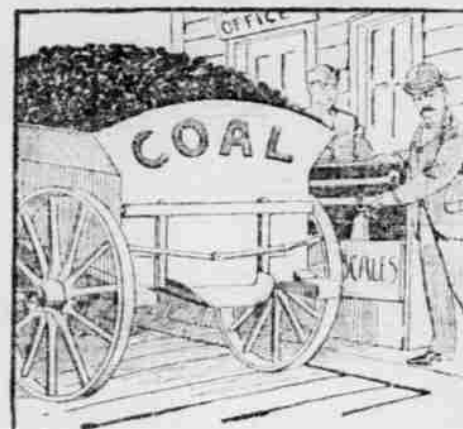
The fight for a pure food law in congress lasted nearly twenty years. Dr. Wiley says the consumers started it, aided by the grangers. Then some of the manufacturers took it up, and finally some state officials, who urged a federal law. Of course the proposed legislation was bitterly opposed by unscrupulous manufacturers of embalmed foods, doped medicines and prematurely aged whiskies, but the "awakened conscience" of the people along various lines at last brought about the enactment of the present law, which gives excellent promise of food reform after it goes into effect Jan. 1.

Dr. Wiley, who is a native of Indiana, in his sixty-second year, has never found time to get married. His life since early manhood has been devoted unreservedly to chemistry. As a bachelor his remarks concerning cooks may be of interest to married people. Says Dr. Wiley: "We have the most abundant and best foods of the world, but we live more poorly than any other civilized nation. We have the worst cooks and know least how to get the most out of our foods. Cooking is looked down upon here. It should be considered one of the fine arts, and a cook should command a high salary. I know families in Washington who live at the rate of \$5,000 or \$10,000 a year and who nevertheless will get some ignorant woman to spoil their victuals. They will spend thousands of dollars on their tables and waste it all by skimping on the cook."

ROBERTUS LOVE.

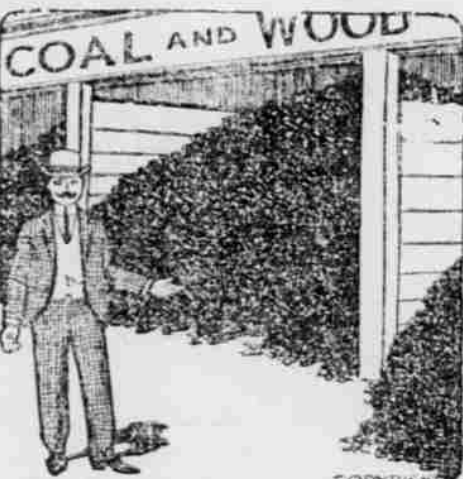


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DR. HARVEY W. WILEY.

people. It is provocative of joy to succeed in inducing the enactment of legal measures calculated to tone up the multitudinous American stomach, casting out such evils as dyspepsia, indigestion, typhoid and other ills too numerous to mention. Among his intimate friends the good Dr. Wiley is known as something of a humorist, and this quality sometimes displays itself upon public occasions when he discusses his hobby. Once Dr. Wiley was dispensing his chemical wisdom before the committee on agriculture of the house of representatives when a rural congressman scornfully asked the distinguished chemist to define a "scientific agriculturist."

"A scientific agriculturist," replied the doctor, "is a gentleman in the employ of the government who can make \$2 grow on an appropriation bill where only \$1 grew before."

Had not Dr. Wiley possessed a keen appreciation of humor he could not have run the gamut of the joke makers during the four years of his "poison squad" boarding house in Washington and come forth fat and jolly, his usefulness unimpaired. If he had been one of those solemn and serious savants of the story books who fly into a rage or grind their teeth when anybody happens to take a jocular view of a highly important proposition the good Dr. Wiley long ere this must have succumbed to nervous prostration. As it was, he seemed thoroughly to enjoy the jests made at the expense of his unique gastronomic experiment, though he never permitted his sense of humor to interfere with his strict scientific observation of the results produced by the consumption of a certain quantity of "doped" food or drink by a certain member of his free boarding squad.

the human stomach. The fact that frequently we buy and eat something sold under a certain name which is really something else in whole or in part because that something else is cheaper for the manufacturer than the thing he pretends to sell is disgusting, to be sure, but unless it looks like what we intend to buy we do not buy it, and right there is where the wily manufacturer gets in his devilish work. He colors it with aniline or coal tar dyes to make it look like the real thing, and that coloring matter does the damage. For a like purpose of deception certain drugs called preservatives are used. These serve to impress the innocent purchaser with the notion that he is buying wholesome meat, for instance, when as a matter of fact the stuff would be putrid but for the "embalming fluid" it contains.

Whisky in Five Minutes.

Dr. Wiley has stirred up not only those who eat food, but those who drink alcoholic liquors. One evening in Washington he was entertaining a party of friends, who began to discuss their favorite brands of whisky. Scotch whisky seemed to be the most popular. "I never drink anything but the real Scotch," said two or three of the guests.

"Do you drink over bars?" asked the doctor, and they said they did. "Then you never drink Scotch whisky at all. Not a bottle of Scotch whisky is to be had in this country except in clubs and private houses. Scotch is made of barley malt cured over a peat fire. In Great Britain I have seen so-called Scotch made of Indian corn alcohol with a little dash of Scotch, which is sold to American dealers as real Scotch whisky by well known distillers."

IN COLLEGE AT ELEVEN

Prodigy at Tufts Read Darwin When Eight Years Old.

RESTS HIMSELF WITH HIS IBSEN

Father of Norbert Weiner Says His Son Is Far From Being "Crammed" and Plays All That He Wishes—Will Stop His Games Any Time to Talk Philosophy and Metaphysics—Has a Marvelous Memory.

The poor, overburdened lazy bug, on which the sins of omission of boys and "boys grown tall" have been laid since the race was young, has its grip even upon Norbert Weiner, the prodigy of eleven years, who has been admitted to the freshman class at Tufts college, says a Boston special dispatch to the New York World.

"He doesn't study too much; he is even lazy at times," declared Professor Leo Weiner, the Harvard instructor whose small son's accomplishments have made him the cynosure of the educational world. This was in defiance of his letting his son undertake college work when most boys are well down in the grammar grades.

"What else can I do?" asked the father when told people remarked that "the boy's father is a Harvard professor and should know better." "He has not been 'crammed.' He plays like other boys when he wants to and

doesn't study much. But he will stop playing any time to talk philosophy or metaphysics.

"His mind is analytical, but while his learning is deep he is not sufficiently advanced, of course, to apply the principles. He has had half a year in a kindergarten, one year in an elementary school and two years in a high school. Yet he appears well fitted for a collegiate course. I shall not press him to study, but will permit him to follow his own course."

"When he was eight years old he was familiar with Darwin, Haeckel, Ribot and Huxley, while he had a smattering of the reasonings of many other philosophers. His memory is marvelous in its retentiveness."

"I don't see why any one is interested in me simply because I like to study when I feel like it. Philosophy is more interesting than fairy tales. In fact, philosophy is fairyland," said the infant collegian, who was rather put out at being interrupted in his perusal of Ibsen and was disinclined to be interviewed.

Childlike in form as he is in age, the child's luminous eyes contain something in their expression that recalls ideas of the supernatural. "Too old for his years" is written in every line of his small but intellectual countenance. The marks of Russian enforced reticence and sorrow are oddly blended with those of American energy, courage and carelessness.

"I like to play, but I much prefer to read," said he. "The boys' pranks amuse me, but when I have seen their games and participated in them I want rest, and I turn to my Huxley or, as

now, to Ibsen. Do you not think him expansive? I get suggestions from him which fill my mind with a thirst for greater things. I don't like occultism. I prefer to work out those problems my father tells me I will have to face in after life."

"But, there, I don't want to talk now. I am to begin to work hard at Tufts and want to rest myself with my Ibsen."

Norbert arises promptly at 7 a. m., dresses himself and turns his first thoughts to his books. He has to be drawn from them to his breakfast. An hour's play with neighboring children satisfies him, and he then wants to return to study. Physically he is strong for a boy of his age, and his health is indeed remarkable considering the close confinement to which he subjects himself.

"He says he has not yet marked out a career for himself. 'I am too young for that. I want to learn all I can before I choose a profession, and I guess I can learn.'"

Norbert Weiner was born in Columbia, Mo., Nov. 26, 1894. His mother was a Missouri girl, his father a Russian student who came to America to seek his fortune. When ten years old the boy passed the examinations for admission to Harvard, but was barred because of his age. This year Tufts college, at the solicitation of his father, admitted him as a freshman upon his passing the entrance examinations with higher rank than any other student matriculating. His English grammar is perfect, his Latin and German are high, but he knows practically nothing of Slavonic, which his father teaches in Harvard.

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